CHALLENGE

FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM ★ LUCHA POR EL COMUNISMO ★ PLP

THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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## FROM NYC TO GAZA

# SHUT THIS RACIST SYSTEM DOWN




*PLP members waving the red flag for communism at a demo uptown— in the working class neighborhood of Washington Heights.*

**NEW YORK CITY, January 20**—Another spirited march – there are many every week - about the genocide in Gaza was held in uptown Manhattan involving over 500 demonstrators. It was organized by a coalition of groups demanding an immediate ceasefire. The police brutally attacked marchers, arresting 10 people for things as minor as assembling in a park or carrying a bullhorn and leading chants, which has now become their general practice citywide. This included a public health student, who in response to the first arrests, led the chant "NYPD, KKK, IDF, All the Same."

### Planting seeds for revolutionary communism from Bronx to Uptown, NYC

In a sea of nationalist, Palestinian flags, Progressive Labor Party (PLP) had a small but spirited group with a communist, red flag. We led chants calling for **"Arab, Jewish, Black and white" unity, "Israel, racista, asesina y fascista" and "Shut this capitalist system down."** (see more chants on page 6) We distributed over 130 copies of CHALLENGE that were, as always at these protests, eagerly taken from our hands. Many told us they had seen previous issues at other demos. We had several in depth conversations, including one with a different healthcare student before the first police attack. She expressed her disillusionment with the racist healthcare system, and we talked about how sanitation workers are the backbone of public health and actually the ones keeping us safe (not racist cops or hospital administrators).

One of us has become active on the chat of a group of over 500 young health care workers met at demonstrations, and out of this has been able to start a study group about capitalism and communism. Others have become active in groups active in Uptown and the Bronx, with more and more interest shown in PLP's revolutionary politics.

### Nationalism is deadly for the working class

The genocide in Gaza has exposed the barbarism of the Israeli and U.S. ruling classes. It also shows the degree to which racism and nationalism have won Zionists and others to support mass murder. Worldwide, millions are protesting in the streets, angry as hell and looking for an alternative. But a Palestinian state or territory led by Hamas, the Palestinian Authority (PA), or some other nationalist group would never be able to provide a safe and fruitful life for workers in Palestine.

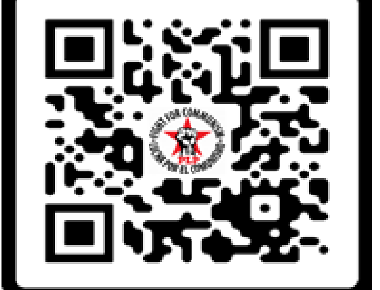
The PA and Hamas have long cooperated with Israel to oppress and repress Palestinians; the UN and its World Court represent the ruling classes of the world. So-called victorious"progressive" nationalists around the world, from South Africa to El Salvador, have done nothing but empower new ruling classes who act as junior partners to imperialists.

Let's continue to march and struggle with protestors against genocide as we raise the need for an international working class movement for communism.✪

## JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL FIGHT FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION





# OUR FIGHT

✰Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

✰The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

✰Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

✰While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

✰Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

✰Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

✰Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

✰Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

✰Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

✰Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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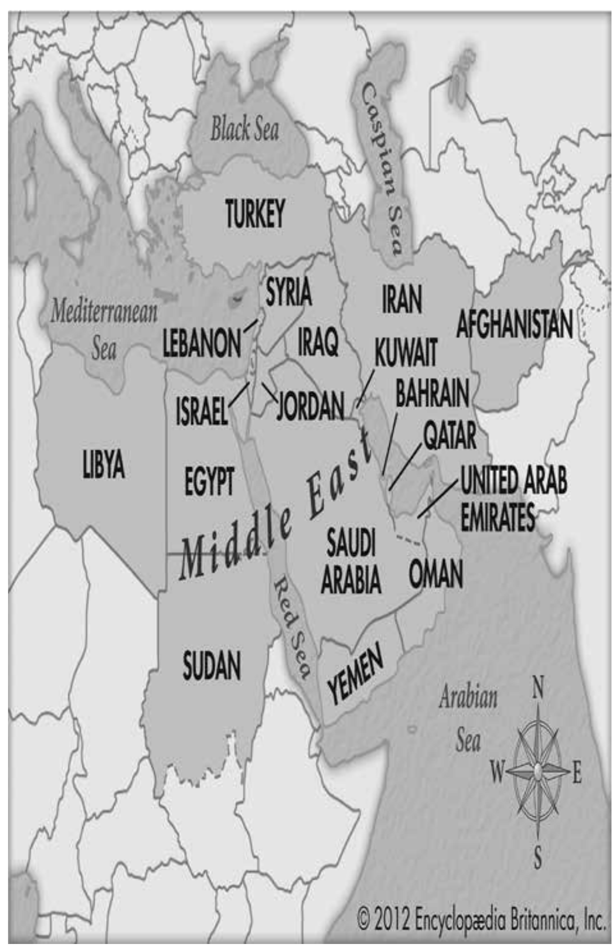

### WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.
While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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## Editorial

# Capitalist tinderbox of war




On January 27, a drone attack by an Iran-backed militia killed three U.S soldiers and wounded more than 30 at an outpost in Jordan, near the border with both Iraq and Syria. It marked the first killings of U.S. troops since Israel's mass murder and ethnic cleansing in Gaza began last October. "Genocide Joe" Biden promptly promised retribution. Two days earlier, the United Nations' World Court cowardly failed to call for a ceasefire in Gaza while warning Israel to "prevent" the genocide already happening (aljazeera.com, 1/26). It's a ruling the Israeli Zionist bosses and U.S. imperialists will simply ignore. And six days earlier, the U.S. and UK launched the eighth missile attack on Yemen in the last two weeks, in retaliation for the Iran-backed Houthis' attacks on cargo ships in the Red Sea.

The bloodbath in Gaza is no longer a contained proxy battle between Israel and the nationalist misleaders of Hamas, with the U.S. and Iran funneling arms from the sidelines. The U.S. and British militaries are now directly involved in an expanding regional war, and the risk of more armies jumping in grows higher by the day. As inter-imperialist competition intensifies, war and more war continues to slaughter workers in the Middle East. As history has shown, only war can solve the capitalists' contradictions. As the rulers scramble to protect their profits over workers' dead and mangled bodies, the Progressive Labor Party calls on the international working class to join us and fight for a communist future.

### Benefits and crisis for Iran's callous bosses

So far, over 26,000 have been murdered in Gaza to date (barrons.com, 1/30). Besides Hamas, Iran's opportunist rulers are backing Hezbollah in Lebanon. They also stand behind Yemen's Houthis, the small-time war criminals striving to assert control over Red Sea shipping routes. The Houthis started as an opposition group to Yemeni bosses allied with Saudi Arabia, Iran's most powerful regional enemy. Over the last 10 years, as the Houthis won control over Yemen's capital, more than 300,000 people have been killed and millions are suffering from starvation (CFR.com, 1/12). The Houthi leaders' anti-Zionist cover aside, they are no friends of the working class.

All things considered, Iran is the biggest beneficiary of the current Middle East conflict. The war has stalled a pending U.S- brokered deal between Israel and Saudi Arabia to form an anti-Iran alliance–a huge victory for Iran's bosses. Israel's genocidal response to Hamas's October 7 massacre has moved millions across the globe to march against the Zionists' savagery and oppression. It may also hurt Biden's re-election chances, as young U.S. workers–and Black workers in particular–are repulsed by the Democrats' blank check for Israeli genocide (New York Times, 1/28). Our class gains nothing by electing candidates who represent one set of bosses or another. Only communist revolution to smash the capitalists' state will allow workers to free themselves from wage slavery, racism, sexism, and imperialist war.

Meanwhile, imperialists on all sides are adding fuel to a fire that none of them completely controls. The Chinese bosses are complaining to their Iranian allies that the Houthis are menacing Chinese ships (Reuters, 1/25) And like all capitalists, the bosses in Iran have pressing internal problems. Last year, hundreds of thousands of young people there, encouraged by the U.S. bosses, joined anti-government demonstrations after security forces killed a young woman for wearing her hijab improperly (Congressional Research Service Rports, 1/26).

### War is coming, and U.S. bosses aren't ready

Since the formation of Israel in 1948, the Middle East has seen almost constant war over oil and control of critical shipping routes. But today we are living in a different period. The collapse of U.S. dominance, the rise of imperialist China, and the worldwide crisis of capitalism is triggering massive instability. With the U.S. bosses now directly involved in the latest imperialist bloodbath, and China and Russia perhaps not far behind, the world is on the edge of a far broader conflict. The U.S. may soon face a three-front war it cannot win: in the Middle East, against an Iran backed by both Russia and China; in Eastern Europe, with the Ukraine-Russia war; and in the South China Sea and Taiwan, in a battle over shipping routes, naval dominance, and semiconductors.

As the world's capitalists reshuffle their alliances and prepare to redivide the globe, internal divisions in the U.S. ruling class are undercutting a credible army. Over the last few years, the U.S. Army has tried to promote more Black and Latin officers and shut down some of the open white nationalism that mushroomed during the Donald Trump administration. As a result, the U.S. Army can't find enough bodies. New white recruits have dropped by over 20 percent, and there aren't enough additional Black and Latin recruits to compensate (Military.com, 1/10). In a sign of just how weak the U.S. has become, Biden has admitted the bombings of Yemen won't stop the Houthis' maritime attacks– but vowed to keep bombing all the same. This volatile tit for tat could be the prelude to World War Three, where the bosses will force workers to kill their class sisters and brothers on a sickening scale.

In the face of this insanity, it's a positive development that so many workers have taken to the streets. At the same time, the weaknesses of the Palestinian national liberation struggle are many and deep. Today's mass movement is at best soft on the brutal, anti-worker Hamas leadership. If they succeeded in winning real power, these Islamist nationalists would betray the heroic armed resistance in Palestine with a state modeled after the workers' hell in Iran. But there is another, brighter future before us. If our class harnesses our righteous anger, we can turn the bosses' wars into the fight for communism. Put your confidence in the international working class! Now is the time to build a revolutionary communist movement. Now is the time to choose between the rising fascist tide and a world where everything is shared to meet workers' needs. The bosses are parasites who create nothing but misery for the international working class. Join us in the final conflict to build a new world without them!✪

# Adams, We Charge You with Genocide!




*From Adams to Biden —liberal misleaders are at the forefront of genocide and racist attacks on the working class.*

Members of the Progressive Labor Party (PLP) , including college professors in the Bronx, joined with coworkers, students and community organizers in rallying against NYC's Mayor Eric Adams last week. Adams came to the South Bronx to deliver his State of the City address to a campus which had been transformed into what looked like a military occupation. We were able to hold a successful rally in a nearby park, with high school and college students and led a short but militant march. We then joined a larger rally.

As we gathered our forces in the park, we heard speeches about Adams' policies that have resulted in migrant families being thrown out in the cold, his barbaric budget cuts to schools, libraries, and the CUNY system, his pro-KKKop policies and, of course, his support of genocide in Gaza.

### Liberal politicians: the main enemy of the working class

Speakers highlighted the systemic racist austerity in our local colleges and how important it was to continue fighting for the services and staff/faculty our students need. A community organizer gave a rousing speech about the Adams administration and their abusive policies towards migrant families. "There is no migrant crisis. There is a housing crisis!" She pointed out how the city 's "State of Emergency" has led to intolerable conditions, such as flimsy tents, overcrowded conditions, and tragically, the recent death of a baby in Queens (Eyewitness News, 1/22). A PLP member made the point that Adams and Biden, both Democrats, have launched genocidal attacks on our class and that turning to them as the "lesser-evil" option is a deadly mistake. She finished with a message of hope: when the working class runs society we will put an end to imperialist war and all forms of oppression.

Our contingent then marched through the neighborhood to join the larger rally. Hundreds of people were packed on the sidewalk and over a hundred copies of CHALLENGE were distributed. Members of our collective were able to give speeches to the mass rally about connecting the genocide in Gaza to the budget cuts in the Bronx, as well as calling out various NGO's (Non Government Organizations) who have not answered the call when migrant families have been so vulnerable.

### Seeing through the bosses' identity politics

This rally highlighted the mass anger at Adams' and Biden's racist attacks on workers. Adams' identity as a Black man did not stop hundreds of mostly Black and Latin youth and workers from seeing him as an enemy of workers and students. This mass consciousness, combined with communist politics can produce a militant, fighting working class army, capable of cutting through the bosses' attempts to divide us. The presence of PLP members and CHALLENGE brought that message to the South Bronx. ✪

# Boston: educators stand vs. genocide

There has been a lot of organizing among workers and students against the U.S. backed Israeli bombing of Gaza. At the November Boston Teachers' Union membership meeting a friend of the Progressive Labor Party (PLP) introduced a resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire over Gaza and for the basic civil and human rights of those living in Gaza to be restored. The motion was adopted from the UFCW3000UE, (United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America), which was passed by several other union locals and areas around the U.S. - including the Massachusetts Teachers Association, (MTA). The motion is both antiracist and anti-war and humanitarian but doesn't address the imperialist nature of the conflict.

### Educators demand a ceasefire, now!

When the motion was made it was toward the end of the meeting. The membership was asked if they wanted to speak for or against the resolution. Two people spoke for it and no one spoke against it. One person called "quorum,"which means if there are not enough people at the meeting the vote won't count. But no one seconded that call. One Palestinian man who had lived in Gaza spoke of the conditions there. The room was silent. The motion passed unanimously! Several teachers thanked our friend for making the motion and new connections were forged.

Out of the meeting, a group of Boston Public Schools (BPS) staff, mostly teachers, formed to organize for the truth around this conflict to be taught in the schools. A teach-in was held and attended by approximately 60 staff and friends. The strengths were that the presenters and audience were multiracial. The panelists were from diverse backgrounds and two had lived in Gaza. One panelist mentioned the existence of a large natural gas reserve right off Gaza's shore.

### Student-worker unity: a sharp weapon against fascist attacks

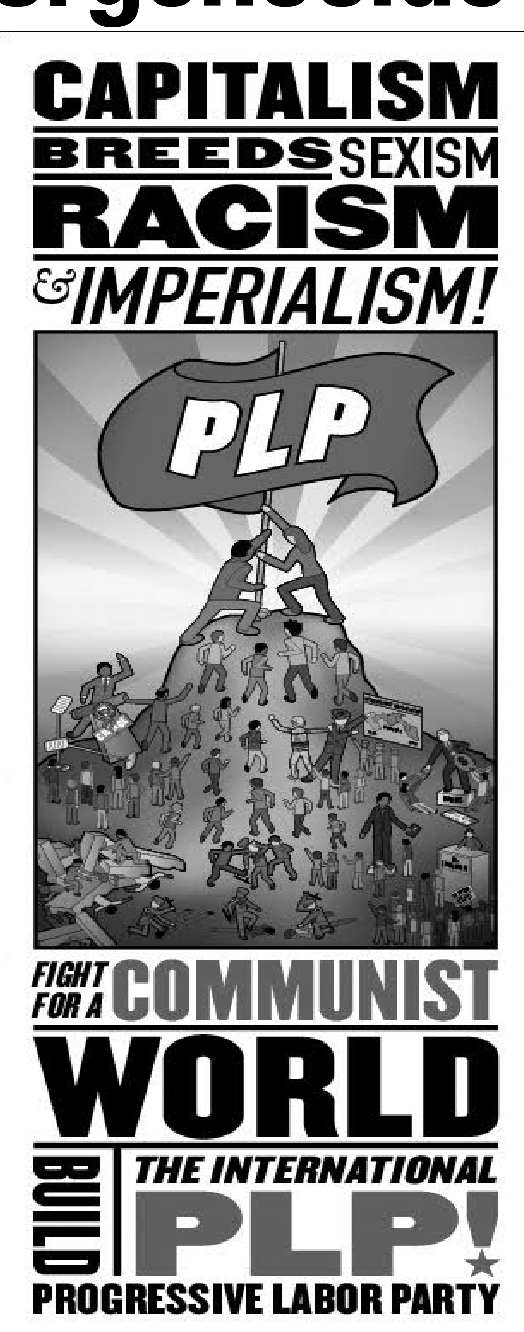
The following week there were walkouts by students in two different high schools. Some of these students faced disciplinary actions, but this was called off when a parent and staff spoke out. This shows the importance of building unity between students, families and educators.

At another school, students were brought in to speak to an Israeli studies professor, presumably to be intimidated and indoctrinated. These same students courageously led a rally and march at a school committee meeting demanding that the pro Palestinian position be heard. BTU members and friends, including PLP members rallied in support. We distributed a leaflet supporting the students, calling for Jewish and Arab workers to unite against Israeli fascism and Hamas' terrorism.

The friend of PLP, reconnected with the daughter of an old friend, who had biked down to the rally herself to join. A friend led a chant with students: Black, Latin, Asian, white - against genocide we must unite!

### Capitalism, not religion, is the root cause of the genocide and Apartheid

Although Zionism was brought out as the racist ideology of the ruling elite of Israel —it wasn't brought out as an aspect of Israeli and U.S. supported dominance of the Middle East. Capitalism and the striving for profits and the necessary control of natural resources, such as oil and gas are the root cause of the conflict. We need to bring this out in educational activities and demonstrations otherwise people are easily manipulated into seeing it as a religious conflict or a clash of civilizations. It has to be understood that the same capitalist system that created the Warsaw Ghetto, the Holocaust, South African Apartheid, the oppression and genocide of Palestinian workers in Gaza, creates racism, misery and death worldwide. We need a movement that unites all of us, breaks down borders to create a new system that doesn't exist for profit but for betterment of the lives of all workers - an egalitarian society - a communist society.✪



# Pakistan: No good bosses in an imperialist system

Since Israel started bombing Gaza, Progressive Labor Party (PLP) members have been actively participating in demonstrations against the genocide of the innocent workers of Palestine. At the beginning all these demonstrations seemed as the continuation of the old rallies organized to condemn the atrocities "Muslims" are facing all over the world. Religious parties always took the lead of these rallies while pleading that Palestinians are Muslims and they are fighting for the liberation of our holy place "Bait-ul-Muqadas"( Al-Aqsa Mosque, Jerusalem). Religious groups always claim that "Palestinian Muslims are fighting to get back the holy place from Israel and we have to support the Jihadis (sacred warriors) who are fighting holy war to establish an Islamic state of Palestine." But our friends and comrades confronted them with the true analysis of the situation and played a key role in bringing the facts about the Israeli occupation and aggression.

### U.S. imperialists sacrifice workers on the altar of profits

We explained that it is not a war between Jews and Muslims but it is a war against the working class. Workers living in the war-ridden areas are now looking for food, shelter and medicines. These poor working class people have always been used as fodder for the interests of imperialists. The perpetual cycle of genocide, occupation, and apartheid against workers in Palestine is a necessity for U.S. imperialists' long-term interests. U.S. and Israeli capitalist bosses want to grab the enormous oil and gas reserves in the Middle East while keeping the war going.

The working class needs liberation from poverty, exploitation, illiteracy, nationalism, racism, sexism and fundamentalism. Workers have never abandoned their search for equality, justice and liberation but it is always undermined by the so-called nationalists and fundamentalists. Workers in Palestine are forced to die in the interests of imperialism. They have been slaughtered for a long time. Hamas and Israel are puppets of the bosses. Hamas is supported by Iran while Israel is supported by the U.S.

### No good sides in bosses wars; choose the side of the working class

Inter-imperialist rivalry is creating fatal divisions among the workers in the name of religion, nation, ethnicity, race and gender. We, working class people all over the world, need to condemn the genocidal attacks by Israeli bosses as well as the terror of Hamas' misleaders. Now as things are getting clearer we can see easily that the working class is in danger. We are on the brink of World War III and the lust of capitalist bosses for supremacy in the Middle East will make more people starved and homeless. It is the duty of all workers to support the workers in Palestine, while organizing demonstrations against the murderous capitalist system which churns out death, starvation and misery.

We also organized demonstrations against the brutal attacks by Israel under the banners of different trade unions and student organizations. We gave a critical analysis of the geopolitical situation in the Middle East as well as in the world. We corrected myths with facts. We also faced resistance from fundamentalist groups while expressing our point of view. Our friends and comrades are delivering speeches and distributing pamphlets at big rallies. We got good responses from these demonstrations as well as some new contacts. We are trying to give true leadership to common people, workers and students. We make it clear that without an international communist revolution we cannot get out of the barbaric clutches of imperialism.

### The only solution is a communist revolution

We cannot get rid of all these wars by just chanting slogans against imperialists but we need to arm the people with an international revolutionary communist line and lead them under the red flag of PLP. We need an international and united struggle against every sort of nationalism, fascism and fundamentalism. We are struggling in a very difficult and dangerous situation to spread our communist ideas while going into every fight against capitalist evils. PLP is the only hope for the working class in these dark days and we are striving for the bright future of the working class all over the world.

# Fighters in MLA oppose Gaza Genocide

Martin Luther King's call to civil rights action, "the fierce urgency of now," animated political action on Gaza at the January 2024 convention of the Modern Language Association (MLA). The MLA Radical Caucus—including core organizers from the Progressive Labor Party (PLP)—felt it was absolutely necessary to act in the MLA, the largest professional organization of academics in the humanities. But we could not call for a ceasefire and an end to the Gaza genocide, as comrades and friends had just successfully done at the annual meeting of the American Public Health Association (Democracy Now, Nov. 20, 2023).

Why? Because the MLA has made it very difficult to pass any resolution critical of Israel and its U.S. support. They stifled a 2017 resolution for BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions on Israel), for instance. This repression of dissent shows how liberal officials, in a pre-fascist period, are preparing the ground for fascism in the universities. Barnard College, for example, has banned ALL political posters on campus (New York Times, 1/24).

### Organizing against fascist attacks on students and workers

So we brought an emergency motion for the MLA Executive Council to call on university administrators to defend pro-Palestinian campus organizers from attack by politicians, pro-Israel rightist, and universities themselves. Recent attacks, including the sacking of the Harvard and Penn presidents for not being sufficiently pro-Israel, made this idea appeal to the vast majority of MLA delegates.




On January 6, by a margin of 12-1, they passed the Radical Caucus motion. The delegates spoke up for international solidarity, against the silence and complicity the ruling class would like to normalize among faculty and students. We will pressure the MLA Executive Council to act on the motion at their February meeting.

Our action unfolded in a somber atmosphere as Gaza was being reduced to rubble with every passing day. We did not know what response we would get; MLA administrators were discouraging from the start; our core group was small. But we had reached out earlier to some of the MLA Forums (sub-fields in which MLA members organize themselves, like Arab and Arab-American Studies, Global Francophone Studies, or Caribbean Studies). Leaders from the thirteen forums who signed on to the Radical Caucus motion swelled our numbers and joined in planning the campaign. We were gathering momentum! We also picked up support from members of the Marxist Literary Group, where PLP has a presence.

At the Open Hearing on motions, to which our flyers and conversations had drawn a hundred people, our new friends quickly took the lead in speaking for the motion. Palestinian colleagues described death threats they had received for speaking out. Black radical members drew parallels between the colonialist cruelty of the Israeli Defence Forces and the racism of American police. Others pointed to the need for particular defense of pro-Palestinian free speech, the need not to hide behind the slogan of academic freedom for all, which one speaker compared to the slogan "All Lives Matter." By the end of that meeting we thought we might have the momentum we needed, and it seems the MLA officials realized the same thing. They didn't block our motion and put it in a good place on the agenda for the Delegate Assembly the next day.

That night 16 people crowded into a hotel room for the Radical Caucus annual meeting. By now, after our success at the Open Hearing, we were getting to know one another and gaining confidence. That afternoon we attended a Palestinian poetry of resistance read-

*Continued on page 7*

# Ecuador: workers caught in bosses' crossfire

Ecuador, January 31—Workers in Ecuador have found themselves caught between a turf war between drug gangs led by Jose Adolfo Macias, known by the alias "Fito" and the Ecuadorian state headed by new president Daniel Noboa. Workers of course have been the victims of the attacks by both sides of this fight. Gunmen hired by the Cartels have taken hundreds of hostages. They have also taken over a TV station during a live broadcast (an event which has been widely viewed over the internet), killing at least 14 people, and threatening to execute more workers and soldiers.

In response, the government has the country on lockdown, has instituted a curfew, and seeks to have workers in Ecuador pay for these wars (Reuters, 1/12). All this, while terrible economic conditions wreak havoc on Ecuadoran workers. Twenty-five percent of Ecuadorian children lack access to proper nutrition (Institute for Human Rights, 7/9/23).

### Ecuador gangs a symptom of capitalism in crisis

The appearance of the government defending its citizens from gangs hides the true essence of the conflict: bosses vying for control of decreasing profits during a crisis of capitalism. Ecuador's oil-dependent economy is on the decline and its government, like many of the countries who do not benefit as much from imperialist plunder, is not powerful enough to defeat rival non-state capitalists such as the drug gangs. That will not stop capitalist governments like the one in Ecuador from trying to institute higher levels of fascism, while exposing workers to more violence.

In fact, Ecuador's plans to build new high-security prisons and institute harsher legal penalties for drug possession were inspired by El Salvador's own recent war on drugs. That war on workers has resulted in 60,000 people being imprisoned in a country of six million, with one in six estimated to be innocent (San Fernando Sun, 3/22/23).

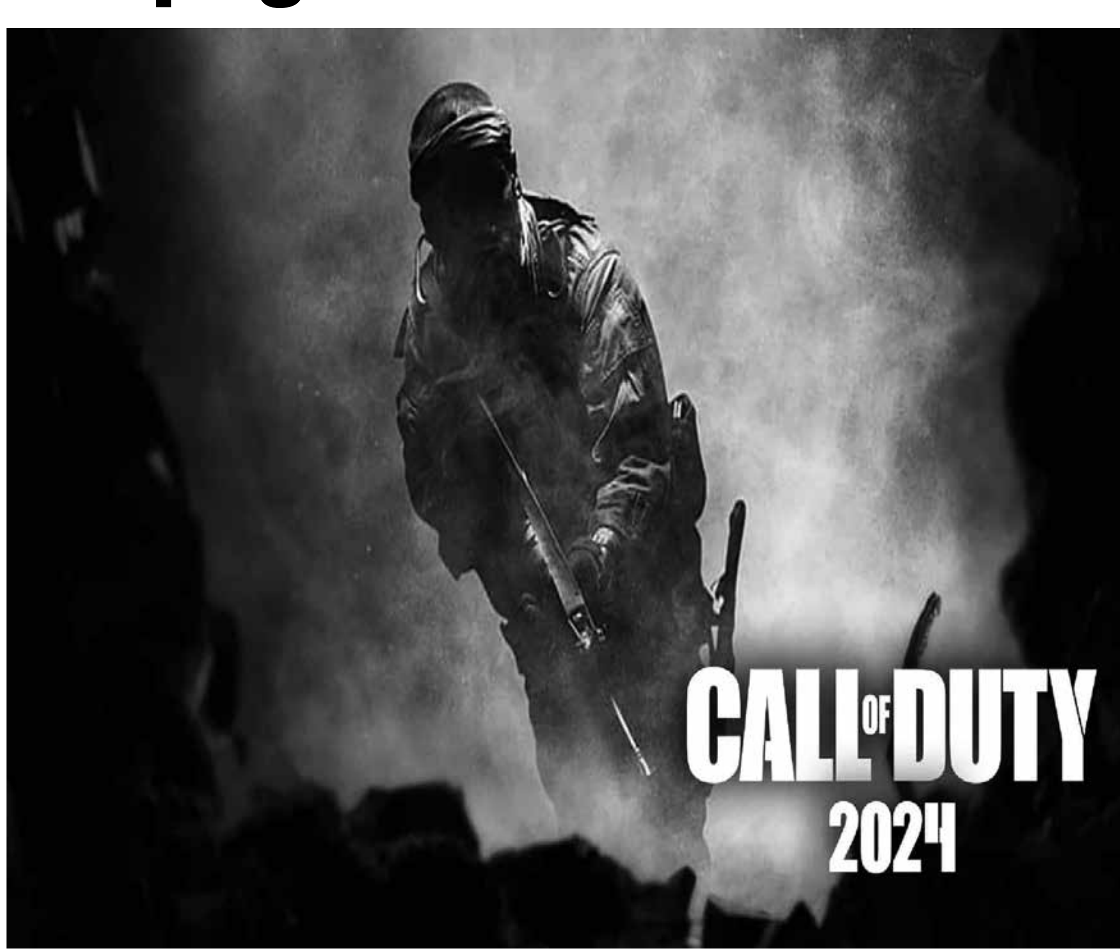
Bosses in the Philippines have waged their own "war on drugs" since 2016 which resulted in the deaths of 12,000 mostly poor urban workers.

This conflict also shows how the United States and Europe are struggling to maintain order in the countries under their sphere of influence. U.S. ally Ukraine has failed to repel the Russian attacks despite billions of dollars in weapons, Israel continues its genocide of workers in Palestine despite a weak U.S. pressure to reign in the conflict. Recently, China has surpassed the United States as Ecuador's top trading partner (Al Jazeera 12/19/22).

### Communsim is the only solution to imperialist war and violence

As crises of capitalism such as drug violence continue to get worse, and the inter-imperialist rivalry between the United States and China heats up, workers will continue to be exposed to more violence and fascism at the hands of their bosses. The only thing that will save all workers from drug gangs, state gangs and imperialist war is communism, where workers not capitalist war-mongerers actually run society. Join the Progressive Labor Party and let's lead this revolution together!

# "Call of Duty" —Reject Imperialist Propaganda and Embrace Communism




*Call of Duty video game series: manipulating youth to kill and die for U.S. imperialism since 2003*

Late last year, the U.S. imperialist propaganda machine cranked out another "game" Call of Duty Modern Warfare III to encourage young workers to enlist in their bloodsoaked military and die for oil profits. The U.S. imperialists know that they are facing ever increasing competition and in fact are already deeply engaged in the wars in Israel/Palestine and Ukraine/Russia. Just as Russia, Ukraine, and Israel are desperately attempting to recruit or coerce youth to join their militaries, so too does the U.S. military as it leverages video games to boost its dismal recruiting as it prepares for further, more expansive wars.

For 20 years, Activision Blizzard has launched new versions of Call of Duty (CoD) "ripped from the headlines" video games mimicking U.S. imperialists' actions globally. One version of CoD replicated the assassination of Qassem Soleimani, leader of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, while another duplicated U.S. bombing of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

### Call of Duty: propaganda in service of U.S. imeprialism

The veil all but disappears, as the Marine Corps Entertainment Media Liaison Office is credited as a consultant and Activision Blizzard consistently credits the Marines across the franchise. CoD is not just profitable war fan-fiction, (earning $27 billion from 2013 to 2020), it is tied insidiously to the U.S. military. Activision Blizzard is infested with U.S. State Department and Defense Department personnel, making CoD military propaganda. With over 90 percent of American children playing video games, the military is deepening its reach to Twitch and Discord gamers, to lure prospective soldiers. Such blatant activity has prompted Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (still a misleader for workers) to sponsor a House amendment to ban the military from such activities. CoD is intended to manipulate the working class to fight for the bosses' wars, accept U.S.imperialism, and join the military.

Who are the imperialist agents in Activision Blizzard? Chief among these is Frances Townsend, Activision Blizzard's senior counsel and executive vice president until September 2022 when AB merged with Microsoft. She was Assistant Commandant for Intelligence for the United States Coast Guard, counter-terrorism deputy for Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, and a member of the National Security Council under President George Bush. She serves as trustee of the Atlantic Council, which actively strategizes how NATO can manage foreign affairs and, she also serves on the boards of the Council on Foreign Relations, the Trilateral Commission, and the International Republican Institute. These are all bosses' think tanks strategizing on how to promote U.S. imperialism.

Another Activision capitalist agent is Brian Joseph Bulatao who is their current chief administrative officer. He previously was appointed to be the CIA's Chief Operating Officer by CIA Director Mike Pompeo.

Grant Dixton is Activision's Chief Legal Counsel. He previously was a law clerk at the U.S. Supreme Court and the senior vice president of Boeing, a military aerospace company. As loyal servants of the U.S. empire, Bulatao and Dixton make CoD military propaganda and reflect the intimate connection between video game media and military production for war.

### Promoting nationalism and war crimes with historical lies

To help increase support for U.S. imperialism, CoD revises history portraying the U.S. as the hero, promoting the notion that war crimes like torture are necessary, and desensitizes players to atrocities.

One such alteration of history includes the "Highway of Death" which was a real event following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait where the U.S. military bombed the retreating Iraqi army along with innocent civilians and refugees. However, in the Modern Warfare version, the

*Continued on page 6*

# LETTERS

**We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.**

## Felt 'urgency and emotional rawness'

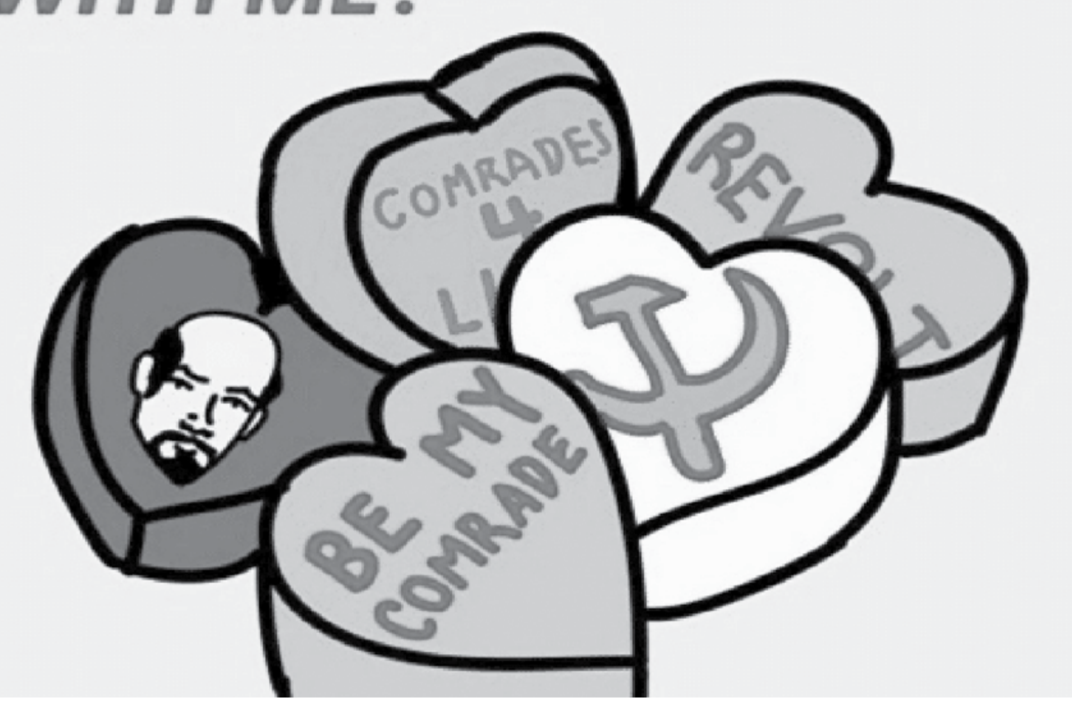
I was impressed by the seriousness of the comrades at the recent cadre school. The school was proof the Party is developing young, working-class, Black and Latin, women leadership to lead the working class to power.

The discussions were advanced, focused, and honest. People shared their questions and disagreements, and we struggled for everyone to be heard. People came from different walks of life, but we were united in our commitment to study the world and fight for a communist future.

We contemplated some of the most complicated issues we face in the class struggle, like the need to confront nationalism and fight for internationalism, the need to fight directly for communism, the necessity of armed struggle and revolutionary violence to defeat the capitalist class once and for all.

You could feel the urgency and emotional rawness in the voices of the comrades in the room: the fate of the international working class is on our shoulders! I came away feeling fortified to apply myself more resolutely to struggling in my neighborhood to win my friends and neighbors to the Progressive Labor Party.

★★★★★




## "Call of Duty" —Reject Imperialist Propaganda and Embrace Communism

*Continued from page 5*

attack is carried out by the Russians. The player's assignment in Modern Warfare II is to kill a 'fictional' Iranian General "Ghorbrani." He even has a white beard and similar attire as Qassem Soleimani who in 2020 was actually assassinated by a drone strike ordered by former President Donald Trump.

In the 2019 edition of CoD, the player executes no-knock raids in the middle of the night, killing anyone whose reasonable response is to shoot back. For example, a fictional mother reaching for a firearm to protect her child is shot. While players can't engage in friendly fire in the game a baby can be killed, either in cold blood or for leverage against parents in the interrogation room.

Modern Warfare 2's "Borderline" mission takes place in the U.S./Mexico border. The player navigates an alley in a residential area until reaching one of the houses, barging in and "de-escalating" by aiming at the civilians. If the player fails to do this, the fictional civilians kill the player.

Also from Modern Warfare 2, in the mission "Hardpoint," participants pilot a helicopter providing air support to ground teams in the fictional region of Las Almas, Mexico. In the process of fighting off cartel members, the player destroys a school, church, restaurant, gas station and market!

In the first game of the Call of Duty: Black Ops series the player is tasked with killing Fidel Castro during the Bay of Pigs, a failed CIA-backed coup.

Overall, Call of Duty promotes imperialism and fascist myths that U.S. intervention saves lives, torture gets results, and "we get dirty, so the world stays clean." This encourages capitalist war, imperialism, racism and implicates Activision Blizzard as part of the sprawling military industrial complex.

### COD recruiting youth to kill and die for U.S imperialism

The U.S. military has never shied away from exploring any relationship, charity or otherwise which promotes soldier recruitment. The U.S. Armed Forces have recently started Twitch channels on which actual soldiers stream games online where viewers can donate and be convinced to join. Twitch viewers in the Army's channel are repeatedly assaulted with chat prompts to "win a Xbox Elite Series 2 controller" The link simultaneously opens a recruiting form with no additional mention of the contest. These solicitations are aimed at kids as young as 12, who line up to be contacted by the U.S. military once they reach 16, the minimum age at which recruiters may legally contact someone in the United States. In 2022, the U.S. Army spent millions of dollars to host tournaments with high profile streamers, targeting Gen-z youth, especially Black, Latin, and young women close to recruitment age (Vice News, 12/1/22)

Our response to the imperialists' murderous "Call of Duty" must be one of our own – Let's embrace our "call of duty" to smash racism, sexism, and capitalism with communist revolution as part of an international process to destroy the roots of exploitation and imperialist war. This "call of duty" is not a game, it is reality.✪

## Chant in Solidarity with workers in Palestine



**How do you spell fascists? IDF**
**How do you spell murderers? IDF**

★

**Hey, hey, ho, ho!**
**The occupation has got to go!**

★

**Joe Biden, you can't hide!**
**We charge you with genocide**

★

**They are killing kids overseas...**
**Shut it down!**
**They're killing kids in our streets...**
**Shut it down!**
**They're getting killed by bombs...**
**Shut it down!**
**They're getting killed by police...**
**Shut it down!**

**If they keep bombing...**
**Shut it down!**
**This racist system**
**Shut it down!**
**This genocidal system**
**Shut it down!**
**This capitalist system**
**Shut it down!**
**Shut this racist system down!**

★

**U.S., Israel hand in hand racist murder is the bosses' plan,**

★

**From Palestine to Mexico**
**The bosses borders, got to go!**

★

# MLA: solidarity with Gaza, building revolution

*Continued from page 4*

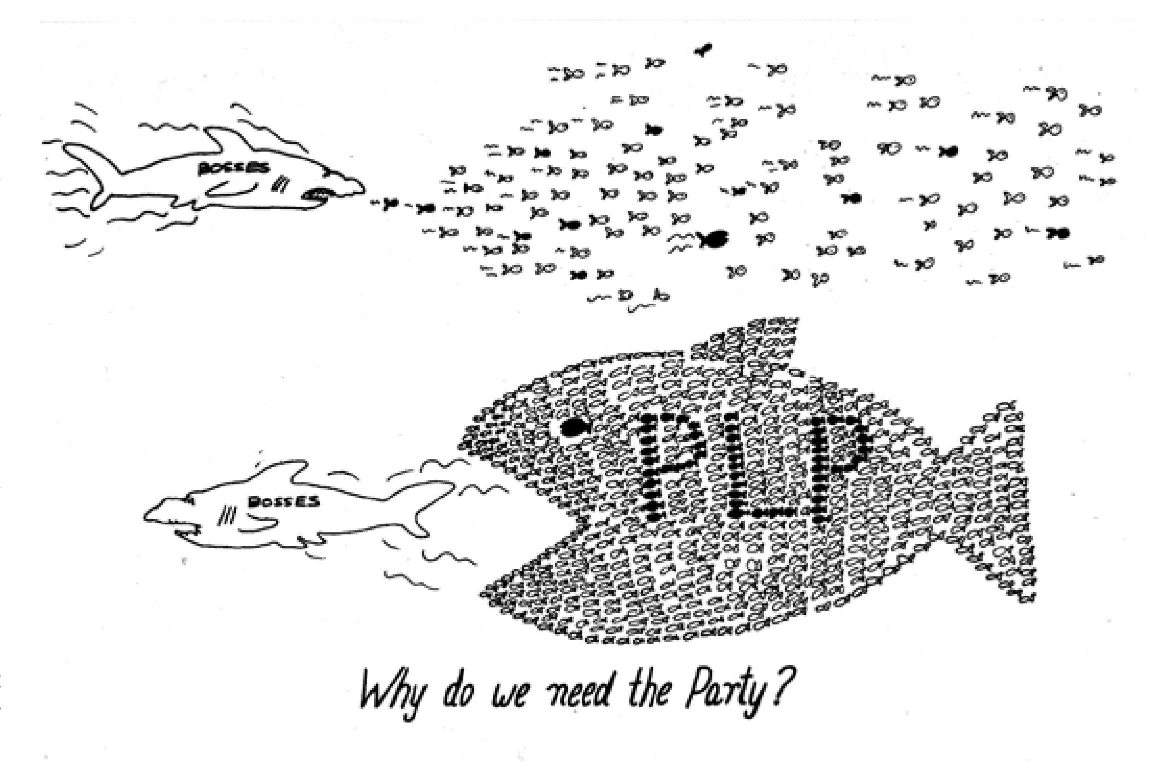
ing organized by a younger group of organizers, MLA for Palestine, fresh from the street rallies in support of Gaza. The poetry brought the Palestinian resistance right there into our convention hotel, and we took that spirit into the night planning meeting.

### Solidarity with workers in Gaza

During the meeting we discussed a PLP flyer, urging the need for the Party so that struggles like this could lead to revolution. One long-time Radical Caucus member said he agreed one hundred percent with that even though he was not a Party member. Someone we'd just met said that our Party had gained legitimacy in this action and we could build on that. We spoke of the imperialist context of Gaza, the communist critique of nationalism in the liberation struggle, the problems of united fronts.

Then we came down to tactics for the next day's Delegate Assembly. A veteran union leader pulled out Roberts' Rules of Order manual so we would be up to speed about parliamentary procedure, necessary in these fights, and we lined up speakers and talking points. Palestinian, Jewish, Afro-descended, Indo-Caribbean, Euro-descended, in our twenties or in our eighties, mainly women-led: we were ready to stand together for workers in Gaza.

At the Assembly, speaker after speaker for the motion took the floor. Some we knew, like the chair of a union academic freedom committee, but most were new to us, like the speaker from African-American Studies who urged solidarity between freedom struggles in the Middle East and North America. In the back of the room, we had brought fifty supporters who were MLA members but not delegates, and five of us were able to speak before the final vote. Working against the MLA's repressive limits, we had won a small, significant victory for international solidarity.



*Why do we need the Party?*

How did this help resistance, or even survival, in Gaza? Indirectly, it may give a little more protection here to advocates of an end to genocide, colonial occupation and capitalist exploitation in Palestine. More directly, we learned that press outlets in Gaza itself reported the MLA vote as a welcome sign of solidarity, giving them some moral support. Our solidarity is in line with the Jan. 18 ceasefire demonstration in Tel Aviv by Jewish and Arab Israelis in the Standing Together group (Haaretz, 1/18). A letter to Jewish ceasefire campaigners around the world from the One Democratic State Initiative signed by 14, 432 Palestinians, responds to this international solidarity: "Amidst this stillness, your voices, your cries…have moved our hearts." Though reform-oriented, actions like these revive the (minority) tradition of Arab-Jewish working-class solidarity in historic Palestine.

### Bringing revolutionary politics to MLA caucuses

When "now" is so clearly a becoming-fascist moment in the capitalist state (U.S., Israel, Ukraine, India…), the urgency of global anti-fascist resistance must strike every communist and leftist. Gaza, like Ukraine, is a foretaste of global war and fascism. Workers in Palestine fighting and trying to survive Israeli fascism need to feel that they are not alone. The Radical Caucus is not a single-issue organization like the BDS campaign; we took this on as part of working-class liberation everywhere, as indeed the best forces in the movement have always understood the call for Palestinian liberation: "From Palestine to Mexico—All the walls have got to go!" For communists, there is more: our urgency is to build not just an anti-fascist resistance, but a revolutionary movement to strike at the roots of 21st-century fascism and war, the rule of capital. Let Gaza resistance and our solidarity with it be a beginning!✪

# RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .







### World military situation mirrors 1930s

Foreign Affairs, 1/26–World War II began as a trio of loosely connected contests for primacy in key regions stretching from Europe to the Asia-Pacific—contests that eventually climaxed and coalesced in globally consuming ways. The history…illustrates uncomfortable parallels to the situation Washington currently confronts…with wars in eastern Europe and the Middle East already raging, and ties between revisionist states becoming more pronounced, all it would take is a clash in the contested western Pacific to bring about another awful scenario—one in which intense, interrelated regional struggles overwhelm the international system and create a crisis of global security unlike anything since 1945. A world at risk could become a world at war.

The parallels between this earlier era and the present are striking. Today, as in the 1930s, the international system is facing three sharp regional challenges…Russia and China are drawing closer through their "no limits" strategic partnership, which features arms sales, deepening defense-technological cooperation, and displays of geopolitical solidarity such as military exercises in global hot spots…the Sino-Russian partnership has pacified what was once the world's most militarized border and enabled both countries to focus on their contests with Washington and its friends.

### Preparing soldiers to fight in nuclear war

Business Insider, 1/26–Russian scientists have created a new simulator to train Moscow's troops on how to operate in the event of a nuclear explosion… The simulator… is set to be used in military exercises to prepare Russian ground forces for post-explosion combat missions, the state-run Tass news agency reported on Tuesday. State media said the simulator would also instruct chemical, biological, and radiation reconnaissance teams on how to find the epicenter and determine the characteristics of a blast.

"The purpose of the model is to simulate what a nuclear strike looks like — the shock effect, flash of light and mushroom cloud of a ground-based nuclear explosion," the description of the simulator's patent says, according to Tass.

The US is working toward upgrading its silo-based intercontinental ballistic missiles, building new bombers, and developing ballistic-missile submarines. In October, the Pentagon announced that it would pursue a new variant of the B61 nuclear gravity bomb, an air-launched weapon to be designated the B61-13, pending approval from lawmakers.

### Farmers aim to shut down Paris

France24, 1/28–Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin on Sunday tasked law enforcement officials with putting into place "extensive security measures" to prevent farmers from blocking Paris area airports or its Rungis market and "to prohibit any entry into Paris". The leaders of two of France's largest farming unions said Saturday that members from the regions around Paris "will begin an indefinite siege of the capital" on Monday. "All the major roads leading to the capital will be occupied by farmers," they said, announcing their intention to blockade the massive Rungis wholesale food market south of the capital. French farmers are furious at what they say is a squeeze on purchase prices for produce by supermarket and industrial buyers, as well as complex environmental regulations. But the last straw for many was the phasing-out of a tax break on diesel fuel for farm equipment.

### West African nations move further away from French control

Al Jazeera, 1/28–Three military-led West African nations have announced their immediate withdrawal from regional bloc ECOWAS, accusing the body of becoming a threat to its members. Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso "decide in complete sovereignty on the immediate withdrawal" from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), read a joint statement published on Sunday. ECOWAS "under the influence of foreign powers, betraying its founding principles, has become a threat to its member states and its population", read the statement…"There is bad faith within this organization," lamented Ali Mahaman Lamine Zeine, Niger's army-appointed prime minister…The three countries have cut military ties with France, the former colonial power. France once had a strong presence across the Sahel, but announced the withdrawal of its troops from the three countries after the coups.

## 100TH ANNIVERSARY LENIN'S DEATH

# STAND ON THE SHOULDER OF REVOLUTIONARY GIANT



*Vladmir Illich Lenin ( April 22, 1870- January 21, 1924), portrait of a great revolutionary who represented a whole movement led by the working class in the Soviet Union.*

January 21, 2024 is the 100th anniversary of the death of the great revolutionary Vladimir Ilich Ulyanov. "Lenin" was his revolutionary name. He dedicated his life to the exploited and oppressed of the world: workers, peasants, women, and those especially exploited by colonialism and racism. He dedicated his life to the destruction of capitalism and the establishment of an egalitarian world without racism and sexism. As capitalism ravages the world with wars (see editorial, page 2), let us all make a contribution to the fight for communism.

### Lenin: a trailblazer for communist thought

Lenin represented a whole movement, and an entire historical epoch. He did nothing by himself. At the same time, he pushed the working-class struggle for communism ahead by his tireless efforts.

Lenin, one of the giants, along with Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, are trailblazers of communist thought. They exposed the basic contradictions between capitalism and the working class. We still have a great deal to learn from them.

Other great revolutionaries have come from the working class. Stalin was one of these. Lenin, like Marx and Mao Zedong, came from the petty bourgeoisie. They showed that, in the last analysis, what counts for every individual is not birth but his or her ideology, and what he or she decides to dedicate their lives to.

Like Marx and Engels, his great teachers and models, Lenin dedicated his life to the exploited and oppressed of the world. To the working class first of all, but also the peasantry and those super-exploited by colonialism and racism. He was a brilliant and innovative student of Marx and Engels.

### Lenin: theory & practice

Lenin was a great revolutionary theorist. In his early work "What Is To Be Done? " he laid out and fought for the principle: "Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement." By revolutionary theory, he meant the need to expose opportunism, reformism, ultra-leftism, and all ideas that opposed the complete abolition of capitalism and the need for violent revolution to do it.

Lenin invented the concept of the revolutionary party composed of what he called "professional revolutionaries" – workers and others who were devoted to revolution, not to reforming capitalism. This was completely different from the other parties in the Socialist International (the "Second International"). Most of their members were in trade unions. Lenin showed that unions, which are designed to fight for reforms under capitalism, cannot be converted into revolutionary organizations.

But, under the leadership of a revolutionary communist party, unionized workers can be schooled in struggle by strikes, including mass strikes. At the same time, these struggles will show in practice how capitalism cannot be reformed to serve the interests of workers but must be overthrown.

Lenin showed that the revolutionary communist party must be primarily clandestine, illegal. Its legal activities, though important as long as they are permitted by the ruling class, can never be its main form.

Lenin advanced our understanding of imperialism, which he called the "highest stage of capitalism." Imperialism is the control by multinational corporations in the major industrialized countries, whether by military force, financial control, or ownership, of most of the land and people in the world.

### Leading the world

In Lenin's time this control was mainly through actual colonies, where the ruling classes of the imperialist countries ruled and exploited "their" colonies directly. The competition between these imperialist countries – the USA, the UK, France, Germany, Belgium, Holland, Spain, Italy, and Japan – led to both the First and Second World Wars, and to many other wars since.

Under Lenin's leadership the Soviet Union formed the Communist International (Comintern), which trained and organized workers and others from all the colonies in the world to fight for both national independence and then for socialism. This was both successful in winning national independence – there are virtually no more traditional "colonies" ruled directly by imperialist countries – and spectacularly unsuccessful, in that national independence did not lead to communism.

The implications of the revolutionary opposition to imperialism were deeply anti-racist. Lenin's anti-imperialism helped to inspire millions of the globe's darker-skinned peoples to rise up in rebellion against their colonial "masters."

We need to appreciate his revolutionary imagination—seeing that, given the alignment of forces, it was necessary to take a leap into the future—since otherwise the transition might never take place. We in PLP need to keep that constantly before us: no matter how bleak things may appear today, they will change. The future is ours but only if we stick by our revolutionary line and actions as Lenin did and as he taught us to do.

We should study Lenin's works — critically, of course. But respectfully too since we have much to learn.

We, and class-conscious workers, intellectuals, students, and others everywhere, owe him an immense debt. The best way to acknowledge that debt is by working for communist revolution the best we can.✪

### WRITE FOR CHALLENGE!

CHALLENGE strives to be the communist paper for and by the international working class. We call on all readers, supporters, and comrades to submit class struggle articles, analytical pieces, original photos and graphics, letters, and political cartoons.

**The next deadline is night of Friday, February 10**

Send to desafio.challenge@gmail.com. For some guidance and house style rules, please go to www.bit.ly/338ZJow

All submissions are open to collective discussion, struggle, and change. See sidebar on page 2 about fighting for collectivity and against a cult of the individual.



